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Need to take steps to check fraudulent practices in import of raw cashew nuts.

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Sir, my submission in the 'Zero Hour' is regarding the crisis being faced by the cashew industry in India.

More than ten lakhs employees are working in the cashew industry. Out of this, 95 per cent of the workers are women who are from the vulnerable sections in the society. Non-availability of raw cashew is the crisis in the industry. Most of the cashew nuts are imported from African countries and Indonesia. In recent years, the price of imported raw nuts has gone up to abnormal level. The reason behind the abnormal increase in the price of imported cashew nuts is that the black money used to procure raw cashew nuts from the originating African countries. The traders themselves imported the nuts often under the benami names and sold at much higher price to the processor. Since the volumes are high, considerable sums of money get laundered. An import at very high prices facilitates *havala* transactions and these enable huge sums of money to be taken out of the country to be parked in safe havens abroad. Immediate intervention of the Government is required in this matter.

I would also like to state that in the Budget, 2016-17, five per cent of import duty is also imposed upon the import of raw cashew nuts. That is also aggravating the problem.

Hence, I urge upon the Government to initiate action to impose such restrictions as deemed fit on the import of raw cashew nuts to India and to put an end to the fraudulent unfair practices so as to protect the cashew industry, cashew workers and the economy of the country as a whole.

माननीय सभापति: श्री राजीव सातव को श्री एन.के.प्रेमचन्द्रन द्वारा उठाए गए विषय के साथ संबद्ध करने की अनुमति प्रदान की जाती है।